TOMB OF DRACULA
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THE TOMB OF DRACULA™

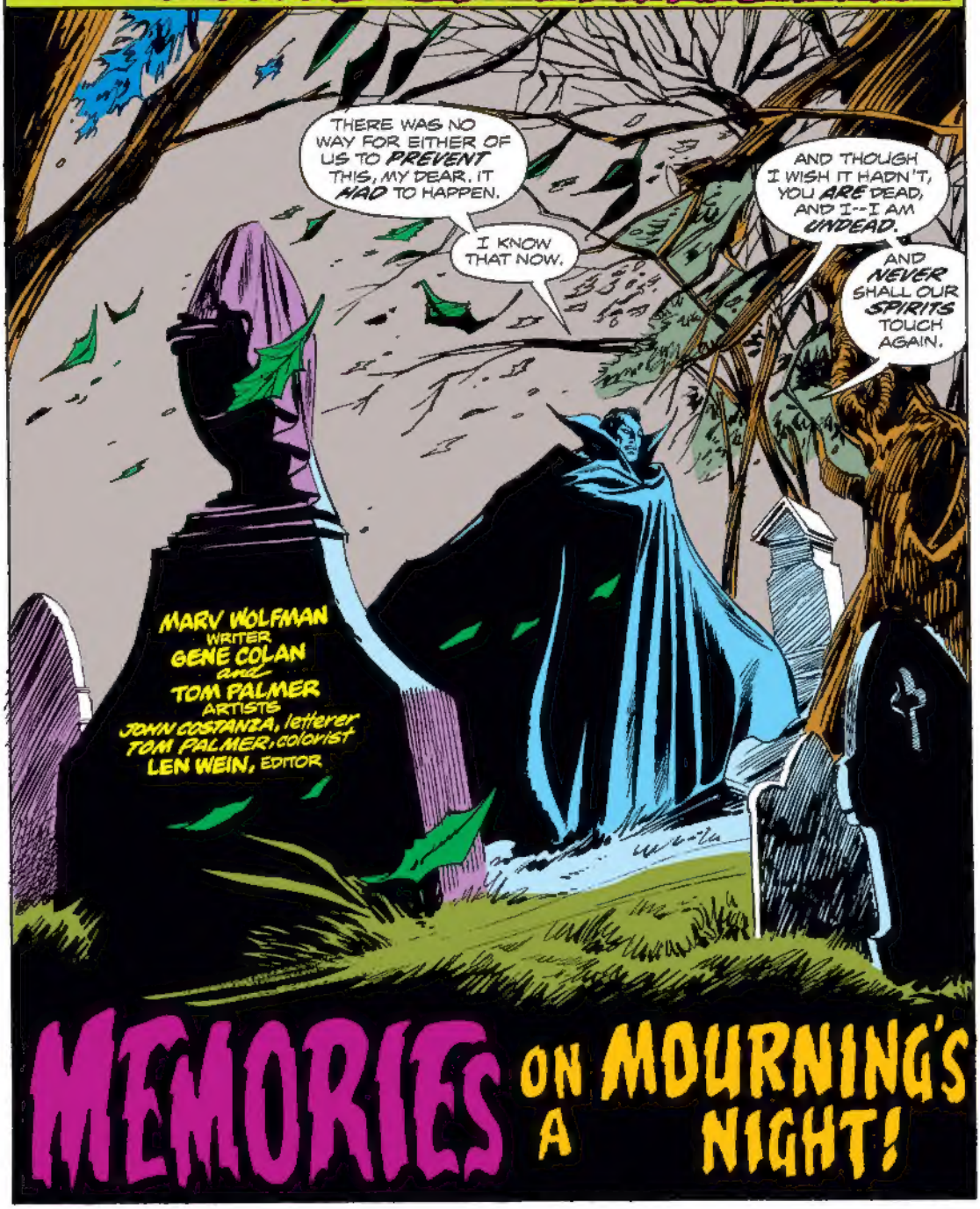
ASSAULT ON A VAMPIRE!

YOU'RE FINISHED, NIGHT-STALKER-- AS OF NOW--

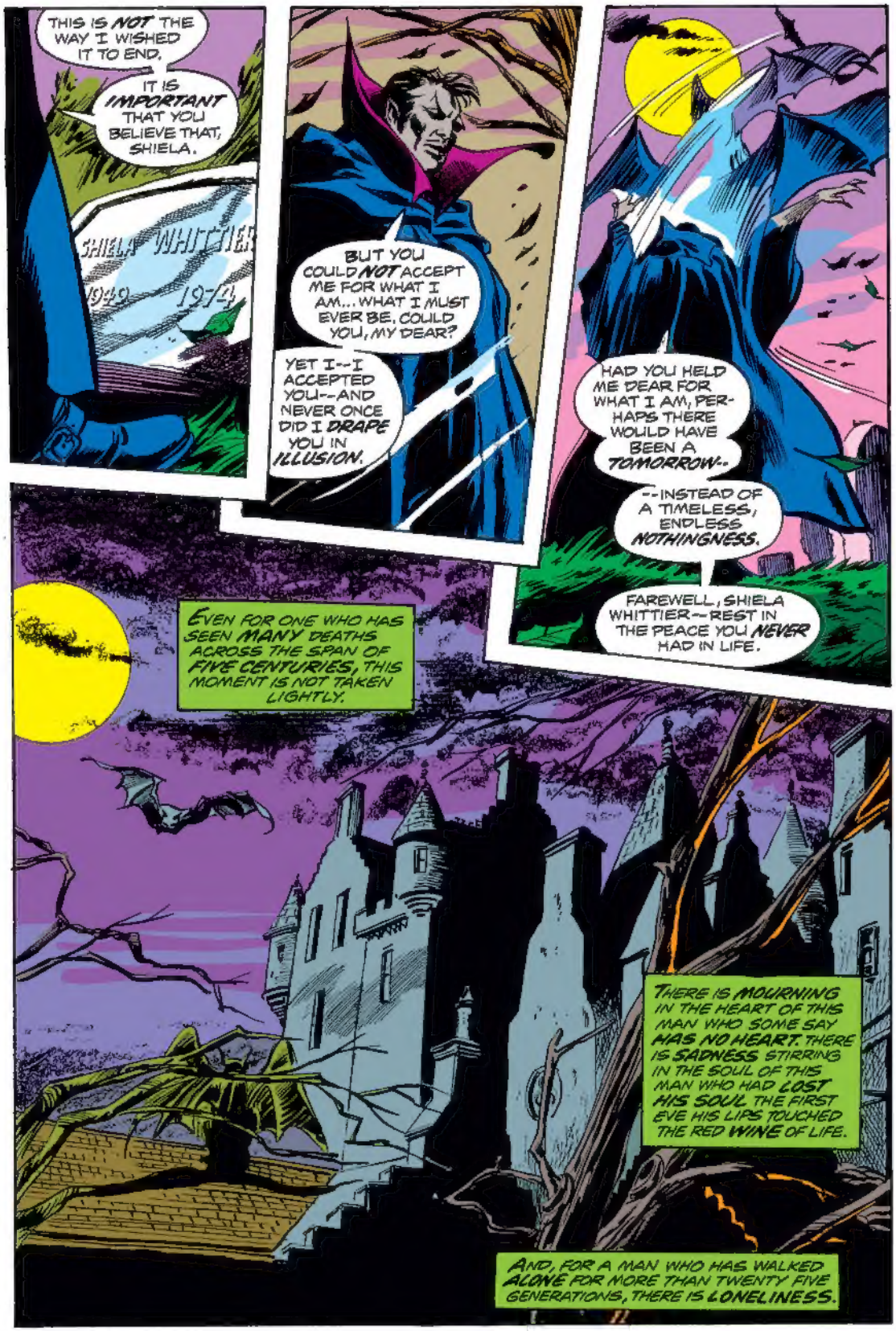
OR MY NAME ISN'T BLADE!

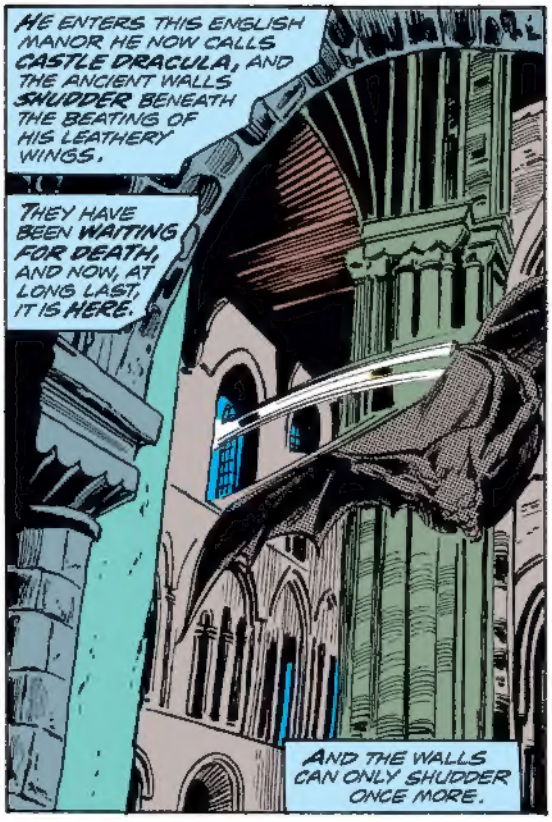
Hidden in the *shadows* where legend and reality merge, there are *tales* of a being who has lived *more than five hundred years.* They say he is a creature born not on earth, but in the deepest bowels of *Hell* itself, they say he thrives upon the *blood* of innocents, that he is the King of Darkness...the Prince of Evil and that even the *bravest* man quakes in fear at the merest mention of his name...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **TOMB OF DRACULA!**

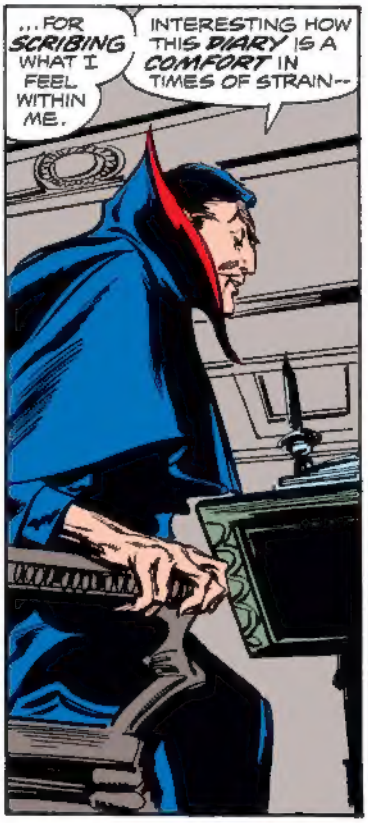

THERE WAS NO WAY FOR EITHER OF US TO PREVENT THIS, MY DEAR. IT HAD TO HAPPEN.
I KNOW THAT NOW.
AND THOUGH I WISH IT HADN'T, YOU ARE DEAD, AND I--I AM UNDEAD.
AND NEVER SHALL OUR SPIRITS TOUCH AGAIN.
MARV WOLFMAN WRITER
GENE COLAN and TOM PALMER ARTISTS
JOHN COSTANZA, letterer
TOM PALMER, colorist
LEN WEIN, EDITOR

MEMORIES ON A MOURNING'S NIGHT!

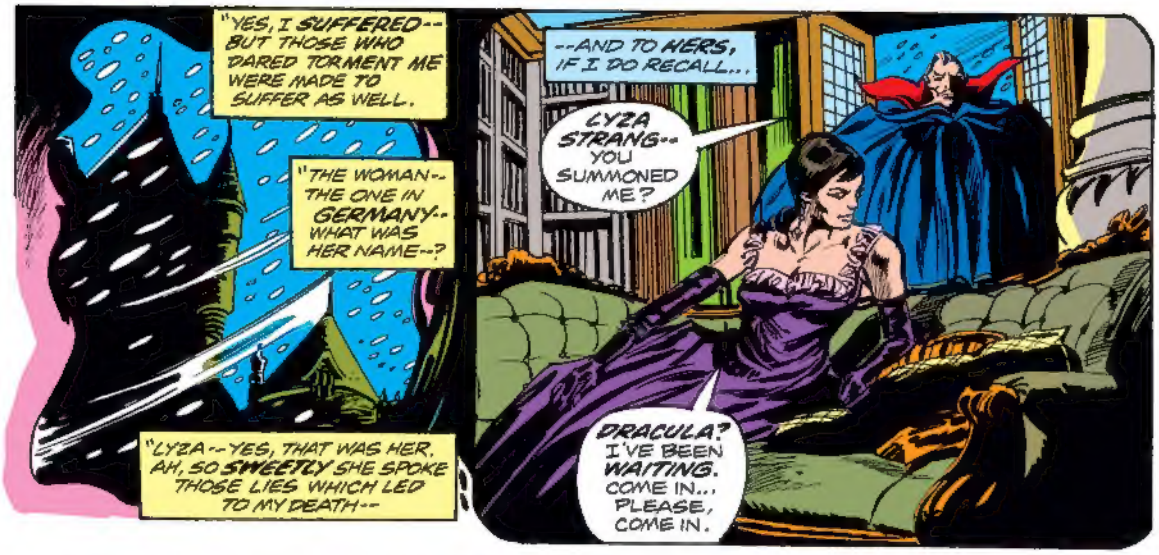

THIS IS NOT THE WAY I WISHED IT TO END.
IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU BELIEVE THAT, SHIELA.
SHIELA WHITTIER
1949 1974
BUT YOU COULD NOT ACCEPT ME FOR WHAT I AM... WHAT I MUST EVER BE, COULD YOU, MY DEAR?
YET I--I ACCEPTED YOU--AND NEVER ONCE DID I DRAPE YOU IN ILLUSION.
HAD YOU HELD ME DEAR FOR WHAT I AM, PERHAPS THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN A TOMORROW--
--INSTEAD OF A TIMELESS, ENDLESS NOTHINGNESS.
FAREWELL, SHIELA WHITTIER--REST IN THE PEACE YOU NEVER HAD IN LIFE.
EVEN FOR ONE WHO HAS SEEN MANY DEATHS ACROSS THE SPAN OF FIVE CENTURIES, THIS MOMENT IS NOT TAKEN LIGHTLY.
THERE IS MOURNING IN THE HEART OF THIS MAN WHO SOME SAY HAS NO HEART. THERE IS SADNESS STIRRING IN THE SOUL OF THIS MAN WHO HAD LOST HIS SOUL THE FIRST EVE HIS LIPS TOUCHED THE RED WINE OF LIFE.
AND, FOR A MAN WHO HAS WALKED ALONE FOR MORE THAN TWENTY FIVE GENERATIONS, THERE IS LONELINESS.


HE ENTERS THIS ENGLISH MANOR HE NOW CALLS CASTLE DRACULA, AND THE ANCIENT WALLS SHUDDER BENEATH THE BEATING OF HIS LEATHERY WINGS.
THEY HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR DEATH, AND NOW, AT LONG LAST, IT IS HERE.
AND THE WALLS CAN ONLY SHUDDER ONCE MORE.

I HAVE NO THIRST FOR THE HUNT TONIGHT--
--PERHAPS IT IS ONLY TIME FOR REFLECTIONS ...FOR MEMORIES...


...FOR SCRIBING WHAT I FEEL WITHIN ME.
INTERESTING HOW THIS DIARY IS A COMFORT IN TIMES OF STRAIN--

--AS IF THE WRITING OF PREVIOUS PAINS SOOTHES THE ONES MOST CURRENT.
"I AM DRACULA," IT BEGINS. "AND TO BE DRACULA IS TO BE AS NO OTHER CREATURE BORN OF GOD OR SATAN. TOO OFTEN HAVE I FORGOTTEN THAT, AND ALL TOO OFTEN HAVE I SUFFERED.

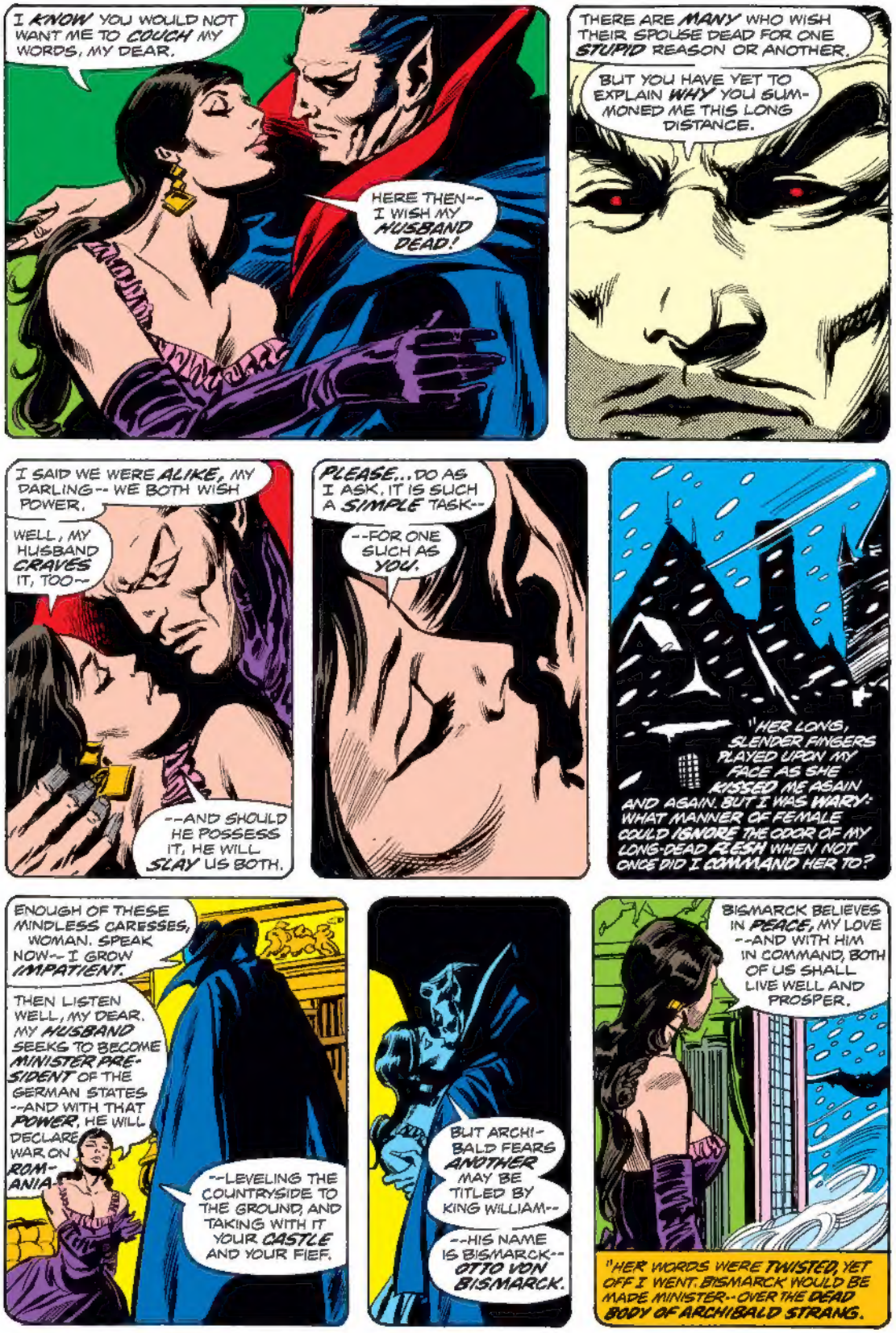

"YES, I SUFFERED-- BUT THOSE WHO DARED TORMENT ME WERE MADE TO SUFFER AS WELL.
"THE WOMAN-- THE ONE IN GERMANY.. WHAT WAS HER NAME--?
"LYZA--YES, THAT WAS HER. AH, SO SWEETLY SHE SPOKE THOSE LIES WHICH LED TO MY DEATH--
--AND TO HERS, IF I DO RECALL...
LYZA STRANG-- YOU SUMMONED ME?
DRACULA? I'VE BEEN WAITING. COME IN.., PLEASE, COME IN.

YOU SENT COURIERS TO MY CASTLE IN TRANSYLVANIA. THE EXPENSE OF SUCH A SUMMONS INDICATES IMPORTANCE.
IMPORTANCE, MY DEAR COUNT? YES, VERY IM-PORTANT--FOR BOTH OF US, I DARE SAY.

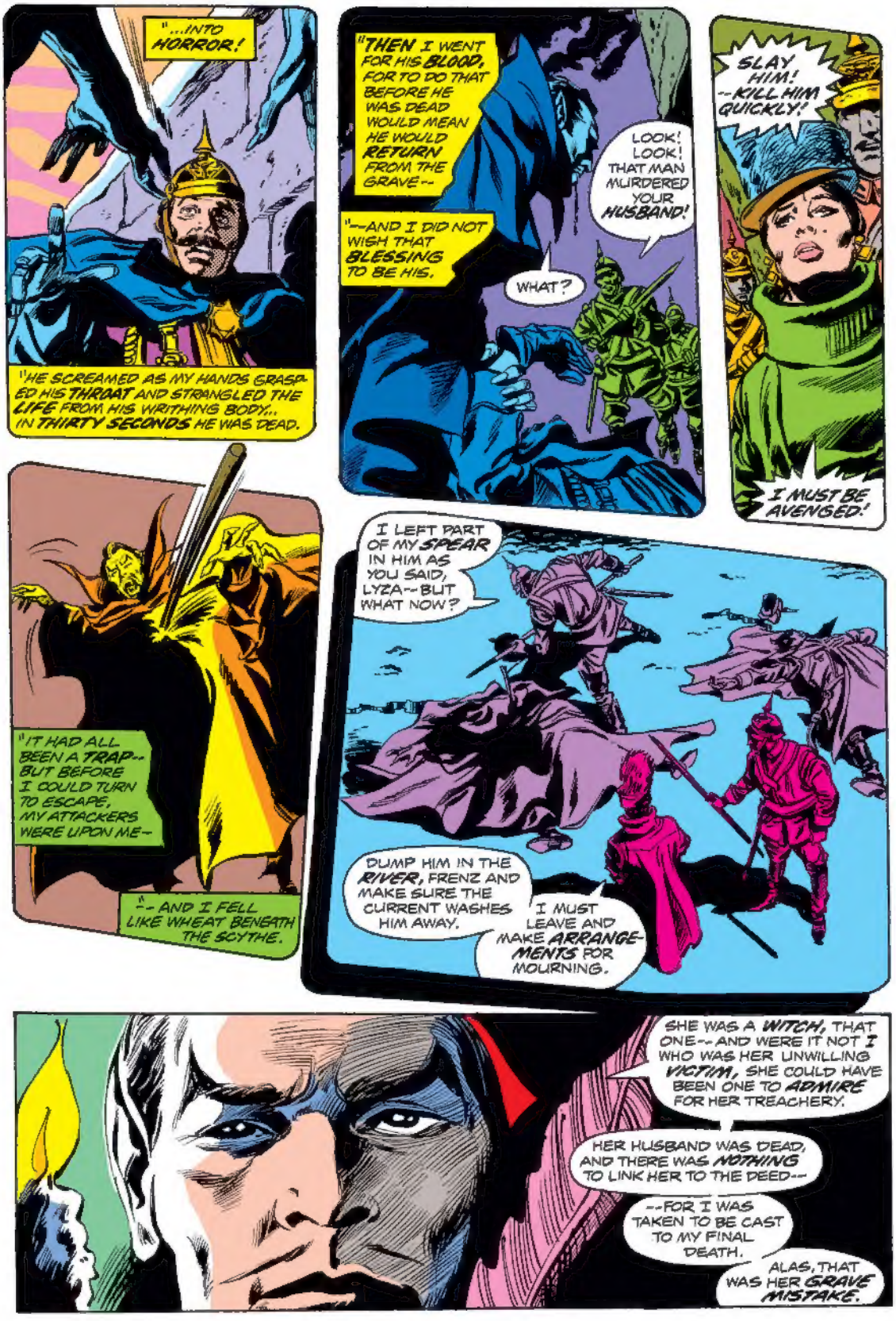
WE ARE MUCH ALIKE, DEAR ONE. FROM THE MANY TALES I'VE HEARD, YOU SEEK POWER.
AS I DO.
WOMAN--

--YOUR AFFECTATIONS DO LITTLE GOOD. SPEAK YOUR PIECE WITHOUT SUCH FEIGNED EMOTIONS, PLEASE.

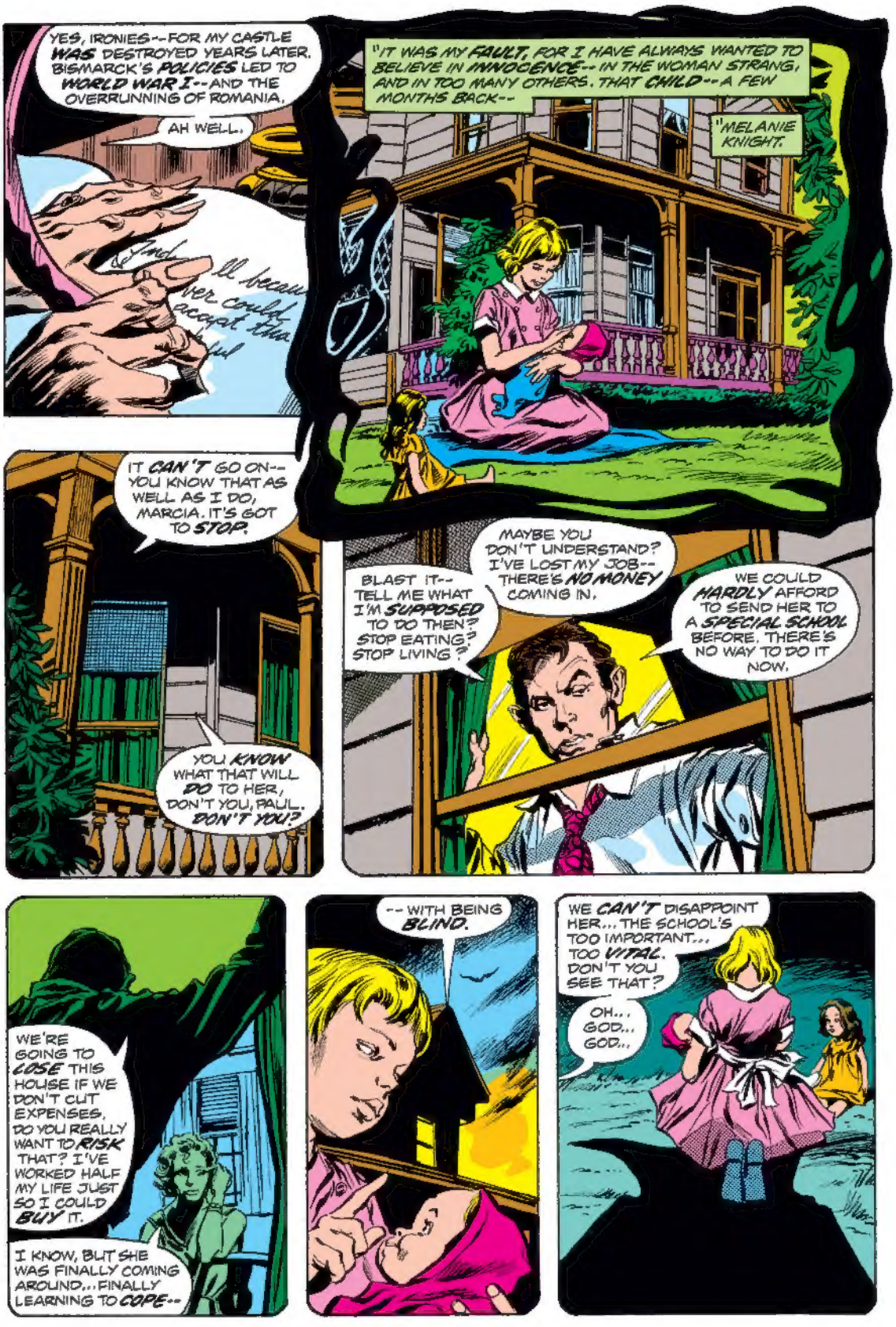
BUT I AM EMOTIONAL, MY COUNT.
AND I DO NOT LIE CONCERNING WHAT IS AT STAKE HERE.

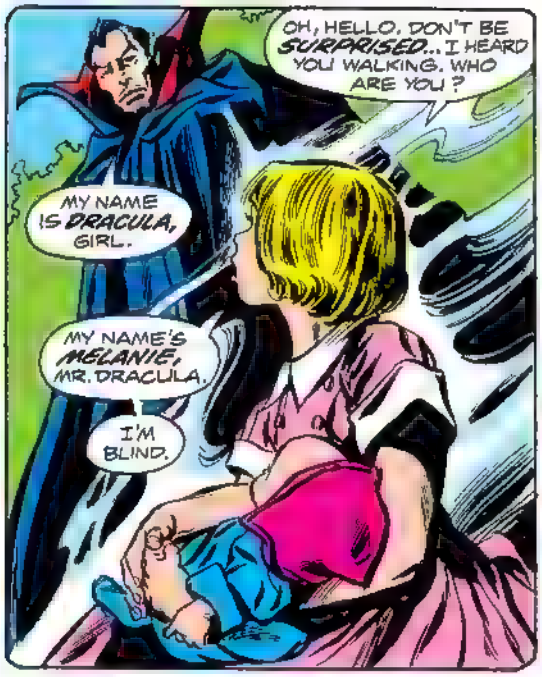

I KNOW YOU WOULD NOT WANT ME TO COUCH MY WORDS, MY DEAR.
HERE THEN-- I WISH MY HUSBAND DEAD!
THERE ARE MANY WHO WISH THEIR SPOUSE DEAD FOR ONE STUPID REASON OR ANOTHER.
BUT YOU HAVE YET TO EXPLAIN WHY YOU SUMMONED ME THIS LONG DISTANCE.
I SAID WE WERE ALIKE, MY DARLING-- WE BOTH WISH POWER.
WELL, MY HUSBAND CRAVES IT, TOO--
--AND SHOULD HE POSSESS IT, HE WILL SLAY US BOTH.
PLEASE... DO AS I ASK. IT IS SUCH A SIMPLE TASK--
--FOR ONE SUCH AS YOU.
"HER LONG, SLENDER FINGERS PLAYED UPON MY FACE AS SHE KISSED ME AGAIN AND AGAIN. BUT I WAS WARY: WHAT MANNER OF FEMALE COULD IGNORE THE ODOR OF MY LONG-DEAD FLESH WHEN NOT ONCE DID I COMMAND HER TO?
ENOUGH OF THESE MINDLESS CARESSES, WOMAN. SPEAK NOW-- I GROW IMPATIENT.
THEN LISTEN WELL, MY DEAR. MY HUSBAND SEEKS TO BECOME MINISTER PRESIDENT OF THE GERMAN STATES --AND WITH THAT POWER, HE WILL DECLARE WAR ON ROMANIA--
--LEVELING THE COUNTRYSIDE TO THE GROUND, AND TAKING WITH IT YOUR CASTLE AND YOUR FIEF.
BUT ARCHIBALD FEARS ANOTHER MAY BE TITLED BY KING WILLIAM--
--HIS NAME IS BISMARCK-- OTTO VON BISMARCK.
BISMARCK BELIEVES IN PEACE, MY LOVE --AND WITH HIM IN COMMAND, BOTH OF US SHALL LIVE WELL AND PROSPER.
"HER WORDS WERE TWISTED, YET OFF I WENT. BISMARCK WOULD BE MADE MINISTER-- OVER THE DEAD BODY OF ARCHIBALD STRANG.

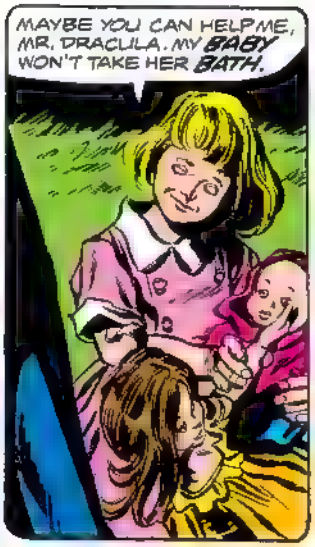
"I PONDERED THE REASONING BEHIND THE WOMAN'S ACTIONS.. SHE SAID HER HUSBAND HAD THREATENED TO LEAVE HER ONCE HE HAD OBTAINED POWER, WHEREAS SHE SAID SHE COULD CONTROL BISMARCK...YES, THIS WOMAN SOUGHT POWER--AND WAS NOT ABOUT TO LOSE IT ONCE IT WAS HERS.
"I SEARCHED OUT THIS WOULD-BE CONQUEROR, STRANG ...AND FINALLY I FOUND HIM.
SO, KING WILLIAM HAS ASKED YOUR RETURN FROM PARIS MERELY TO SETTLE MILITARY APPROPRIATIONS, BISMARCK.
ARE YOU SURE THAT IS ALL HE WANTED?
WHAT MATTER IS IT OF YOURS, STRANG?
LET US NOT FOOL ONE ANOTHER, OTTO. WE BOTH SEEK THE POSITION OF THE MINISTER PRESIDENT.
ONLY I DESERVE IT.
YOU DESERVE NOTHING, STRANG. AND THAT IS WHAT YOU SHALL GET.
GOOD DAY, THEN, BISMARCK. AND WE SHALL SEE WHO SURVIVES THIS FIGHT.
"YES, WE SHALL ALL SEE WHO SURVIVES, STRANG ...WE SHALL ALL SEE.
ARCHIBALD STRANG--DRACULA SENTENCES YOU TO DEATH!
WHAT?!?
"SOME MAY CALL ME A SADIST, BUT THERE IS ALWAYS A SURGE OF PLEASURE IN MY HEART WHEN I WATCH THE FACE OF MY VICTIM CONTORT FROM SURPRISE...


"...INTO HORROR!
"HE SCREAMED AS MY HANDS GRASPED HIS THROAT AND STRANGLED THE LIFE FROM HIS WRITHING BODY... IN THIRTY SECONDS HE WAS DEAD.
"THEN I WENT FOR HIS BLOOD, FOR TO DO THAT BEFORE HE WAS DEAD WOULD MEAN HE WOULD RETURN FROM THE GRAVE--
"--AND I DID NOT WISH THAT BLESSING TO BE HIS.
LOOK! LOOK! THAT MAN MURDERED YOUR HUSBAND!
WHAT?
SLAY HIM! --KILL HIM QUICKLY!
I MUST BE AVENGED!
"IT HAD ALL BEEN A TRAP-- BUT BEFORE I COULD TURN TO ESCAPE, MY ATTACKERS WERE UPON ME--
"-- AND I FELL LIKE WHEAT BENEATH THE SCYTHE.
I LEFT PART OF MY SPEAR IN HIM AS YOU SAID, LYZA-- BUT WHAT NOW?
DUMP HIM IN THE RIVER, FRENZ AND MAKE SURE THE CURRENT WASHES HIM AWAY.
I MUST LEAVE AND MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR MOURNING.
SHE WAS A WITCH, THAT ONE-- AND WERE IT NOT I WHO WAS HER UNWILLING VICTIM, SHE COULD HAVE BEEN ONE TO ADMIRE FOR HER TREACHERY.
HER HUSBAND WAS DEAD, AND THERE WAS NOTHING TO LINK HER TO THE DEED--
--FOR I WAS TAKEN TO BE CAST TO MY FINAL DEATH.
ALAS, THAT WAS HER GRAVE MISTAKE.

"I LATER LEARNED WHAT NEXT TRANSPIRED. LYZA STRANG WENT TO BISMARCK AND TOLD HIM WHAT SHE HAD DONE, AND BESEECHED HIM TO TAKE HER AS HIS. BUT BISMARCK CARED NOT A WHIT FOR THE SCHEMING SLUT.
YOU FOOL--YOU HAD YOUR HUSBAND SLAIN FOR NO REASON-- KING WILLIAM HAD ALREADY APPOINTED ME MINISTER-- AND THERE WAS NEVER ANY QUESTION THAT HE WOULD.
BUT I LOVED YOU... I THOUGHT...
YOU LOVED NO ONE SAVE YOURSELF, WOMAN. WHILE I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED MY WIFE, JOHANNA. NO ONE ELSE.
LEAST OF ALL ONE WHO WOULD KILL HER HUSBAND IN HOPE OF GAINING SOME PALTRY POWER.
NOW GO--LEAVE THIS CITY TONIGHT--BEFORE I TURN YOU IN FOR MURDER.
AND NEVER RETURN SHOULD YOU WISH TO SAVE YOUR OWN LIFE.
"LYZA STRANG RAN; HER PLANS HAD BEEN DASHED, HER HUSBAND WAS DEAD--AND ALL SHE PLOTTED SO CAREFULLY FOR HERSELF WAS LOST.
"INDEED, ALL WAS LOST!
SHE DIED TWICE THAT YEAR--ONCE AT MY HANDS, AND THEN AGAIN BENEATH THE STAKE OF ABRAHAM VAN HELSING, MY ARCH-FOE FOR SO MANY YEARS.
AH, THE IRONIES ...THE INFINITE IRONIES...

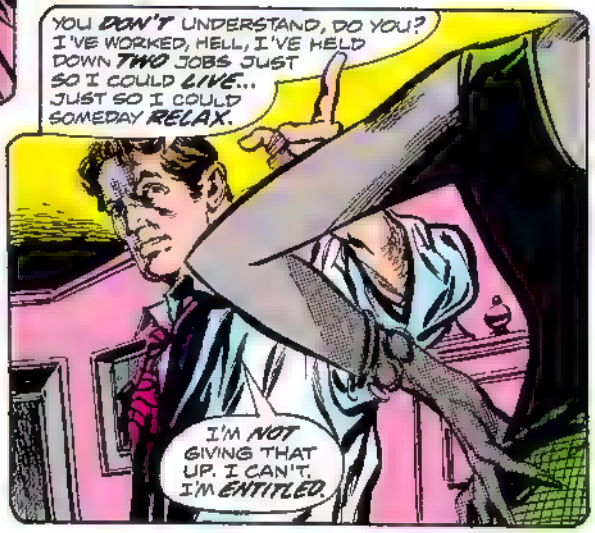

YES, IRONIES--FOR MY CASTLE WAS DESTROYED YEARS LATER, BISMARCK'S POLICIES LED TO WORLD WAR I--AND THE OVERRUNNING OF ROMANIA.
AH WELL.
"IT WAS MY FAULT, FOR I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO BELIEVE IN INNOCENCE--IN THE WOMAN STRANG, AND IN TOO MANY OTHERS. THAT CHILD--A FEW MONTHS BACK--
"MELANIE KNIGHT.
IT CAN'T GO ON--YOU KNOW THAT AS WELL AS I DO, MARCIA. IT'S GOT TO STOP.
YOU KNOW WHAT THAT WILL DO TO HER, DON'T YOU, PAUL. DON'T YOU?
BLAST IT--TELL ME WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO DO THEN? STOP EATING? STOP LIVING?
MAYBE YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND? I'VE LOST MY JOB--THERE'S NO MONEY COMING IN.
WE COULD HARDLY AFFORD TO SEND HER TO A SPECIAL SCHOOL BEFORE. THERE'S NO WAY TO DO IT NOW.
WE'RE GOING TO LOSE THIS HOUSE IF WE DON'T CUT EXPENSES, DO YOU REALLY WANT TO RISK THAT? I'VE WORKED HALF MY LIFE JUST SO I COULD BUY IT.
I KNOW, BUT SHE WAS FINALLY COMING AROUND... FINALLY LEARNING TO COPE--
-- WITH BEING BLIND.
WE CAN'T DISAPPOINT HER... THE SCHOOL'S TOO IMPORTANT... TOO VITAL. DON'T YOU SEE THAT?
OH... GOD... GOD...


OH, HELLO, DON'T BE SURPRISED.. I HEARD YOU WALKING. WHO ARE YOU ?
MY NAME IS DRACULA, GIRL.
MY NAME'S MELANIE, MR. DRACULA.
I'M BLIND.


MAYBE YOU CAN HELP ME, MR. DRACULA. MY BABY WON'T TAKE HER BATH.

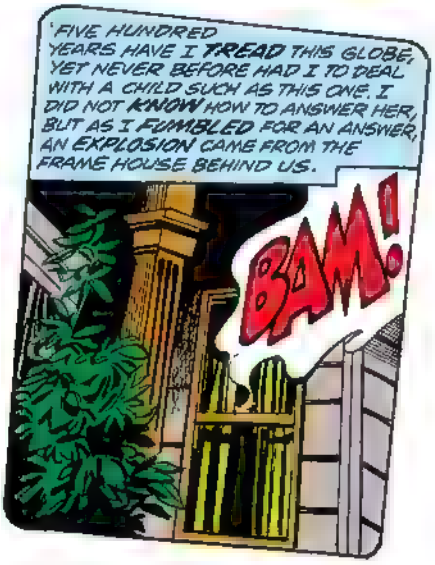
CAN YOU TALK TO HER, PLEASE?

I'D RATHER GIVE UP THIS PLACE--LIVE ANYWHERE. I DON'T CARE.
I DON'T WANT MELANIE RUINED. I WANT HER TO LEARN HOW TO LIVE.

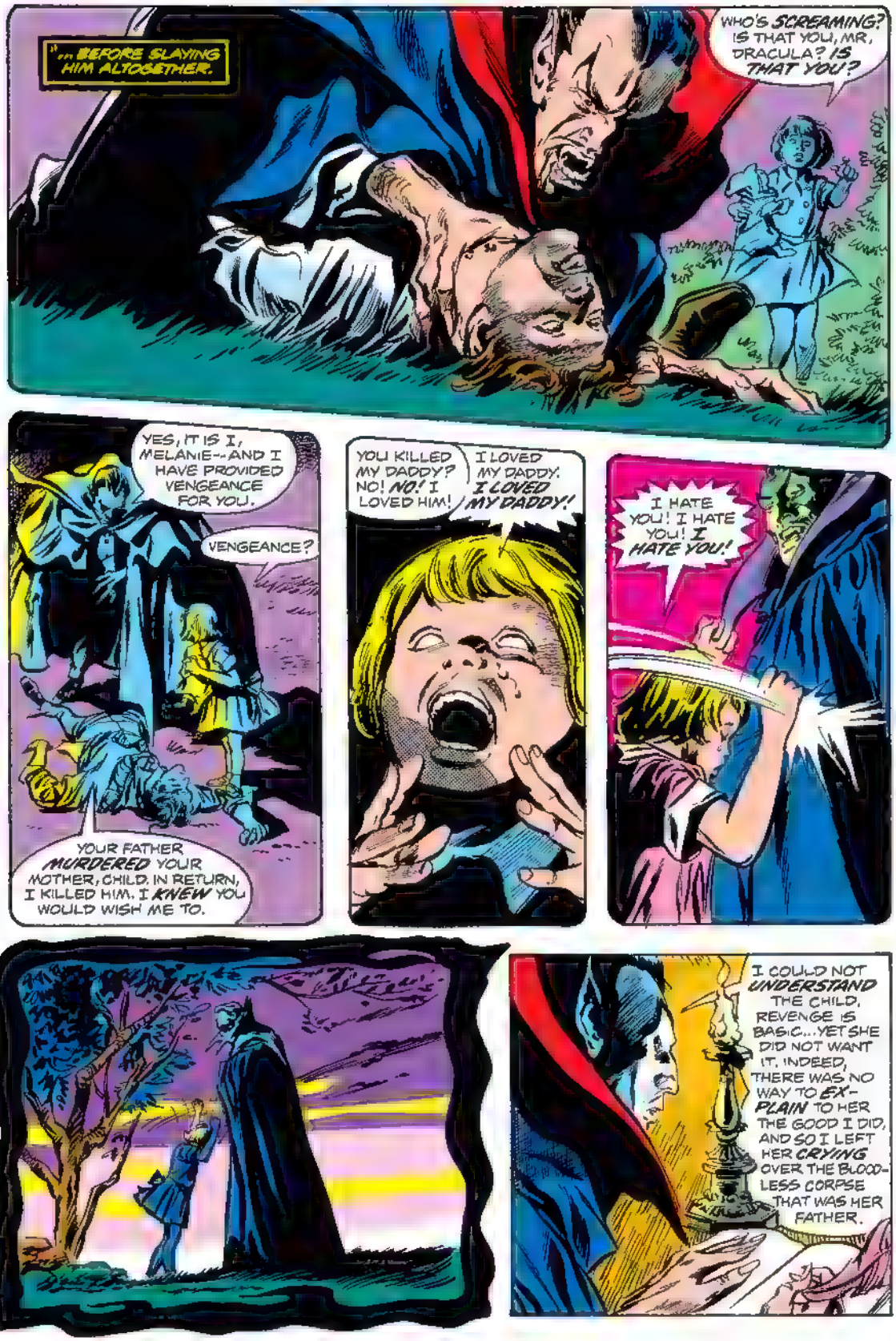

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, DO YOU? I'VE WORKED, HELL, I'VE HELD DOWN TWO JOBS JUST SO I COULD LIVE... JUST SO I COULD SOMEDAY RELAX.
I'M NOT GIVING THAT UP. I CAN'T. I'M ENTITLED.

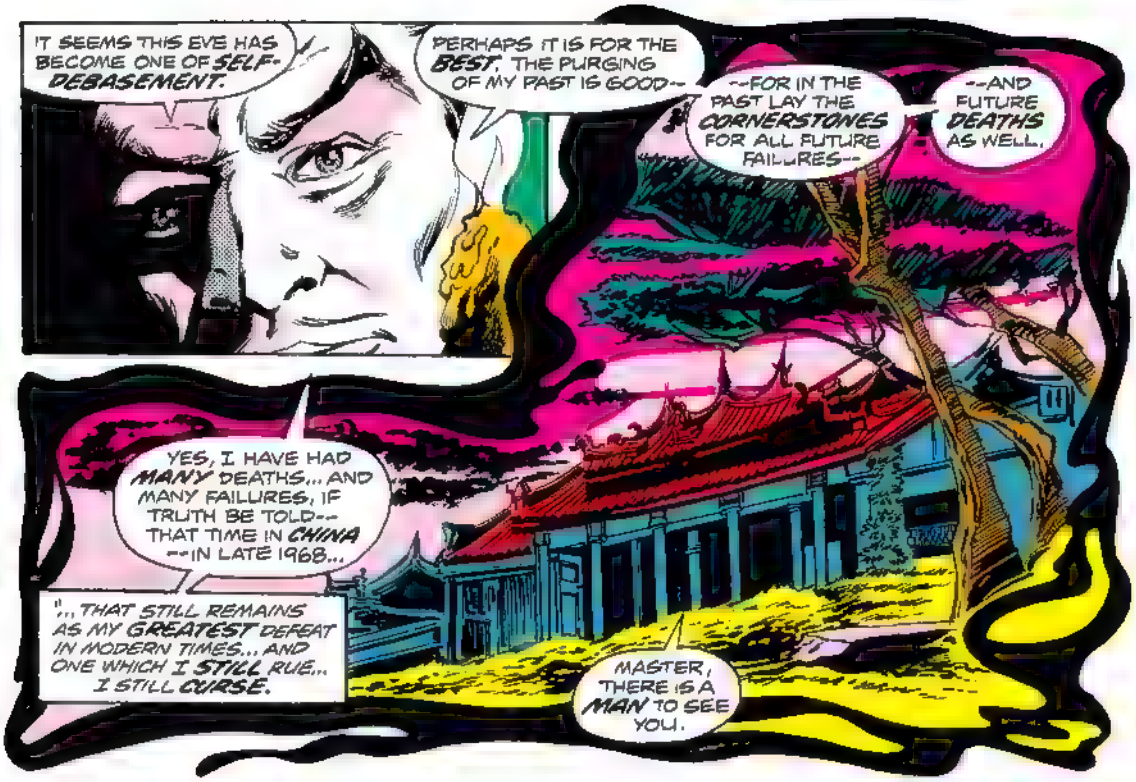
YOU'RE ENTITLED TO NOTHING, BLAST YOU YOU UNDERSTAND, THAT--NOTHING!

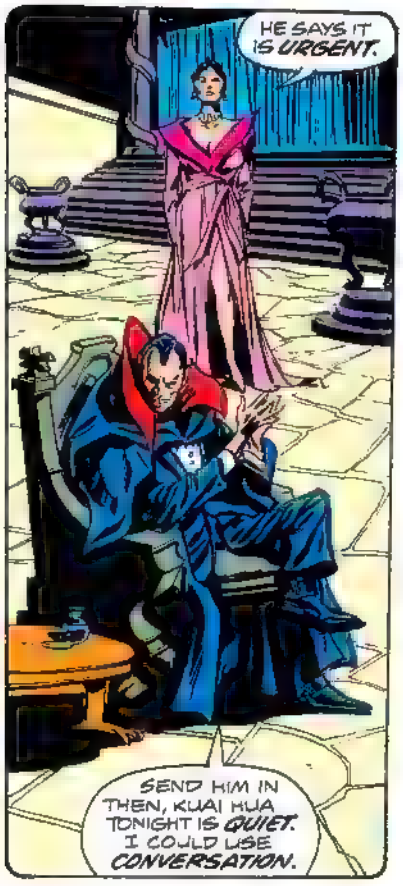
PLEASE TALK TO CYNTHIA, MR. DRACULA. MAYBE SHE'LL LISTEN TO YOU.
I-- UHHHHHH


'FIVE HUNDRED YEARS HAVE I TREAD THIS GLOBE, YET NEVER BEFORE HAD I TO DEAL WITH A CHILD SUCH AS THIS ONE. I DID NOT KNOW HOW TO ANSWER HER, BUT AS I FUMBLED FOR AN ANSWER, AN EXPLOSION CAME FROM THE FRAME HOUSE BEHIND US.
BAM!

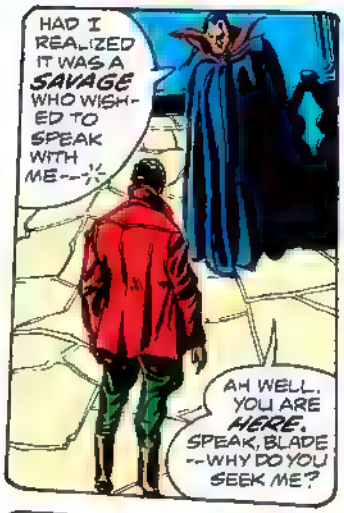
'AND MY MOMENTS OF TRANQUILITY WERE BROKEN FOREVER.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO DO IT, MARCIA. PLEASE GET UP... PLEASE.
WE'LL SEND MELANIE TO THE SCHOOL.. JUST PLEASE GET UP.
WHAT HAPPENED HERE, MAN? SPEAK!
I DIDN'T WANT TO KILL HER. BUT SHE KEPT SLAPPING ME. HITTING ME. THEN. GOD, I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED -- I JUST KILLED HER!
YOU'RE THE GIRL'S FATHER! DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO HER? DO YOU?
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOIN'?
"I WAS CONFRONTED BY THE VERY SAME FORCES WHICH TORE AT ME ALWAYS -- THERE WAS INNOCENCE IN THE GIRL -- AN INNOCENCE I NEVER KNEW...
"AND IT LIVED SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH HORROR.
"ANGERED BY WHAT HAD BEEN DONE TO THE GIRL, I LIFTED THE FRIGHTENED FIGURE HIGH OVER MY HEAD AND THREW HIM MIGHTILY INTO THE YARD.
'HE SQUIRMED LIKE A RAT CAUGHT IN A TRAP AS I LEAPED UPON HIM ONCE MORE.
"THIS MAN HAD KILLED HIS WIFE -- AND MORE -- THE MOTHER OF THAT GIRL...
'AND SEEKING THE REVENGE I KNEW THE CHILD WOULD DEMAND, I BEAT HIM SENSELESS...


"...BEFORE SLAYING HIM ALTOGETHER.
WHO'S SCREAMING? IS THAT YOU, MR. DRACULA? IS THAT YOU?
YES, IT IS I, MELANIE--AND I HAVE PROVIDED VENGEANCE FOR YOU.
VENGEANCE?
YOUR FATHER MURDERED YOUR MOTHER, CHILD. IN RETURN, I KILLED HIM. I KNEW YOU WOULD WISH ME TO.
YOU KILLED MY DADDY? NO! NO! I LOVED HIM!
I LOVED MY DADDY. I LOVED MY DADDY!
I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!
I COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE CHILD. REVENGE IS BASIC...YET SHE DID NOT WANT IT. INDEED, THERE WAS NO WAY TO EXPLAIN TO HER THE GOOD I DID, AND SO I LEFT HER CRYING OVER THE BLOODLESS CORPSE THAT WAS HER FATHER.


IT SEEMS THIS EVE HAS BECOME ONE OF SELF-DEBASEMENT.
PERHAPS IT IS FOR THE BEST. THE PURGING OF MY PAST IS GOOD--
--FOR IN THE PAST LAY THE CORNERSTONES FOR ALL FUTURE FAILURES--
--AND FUTURE DEATHS AS WELL.
YES, I HAVE HAD MANY DEATHS... AND MANY FAILURES, IF TRUTH BE TOLD-- THAT TIME IN CHINA --IN LATE 1968...
"... THAT STILL REMAINS AS MY GREATEST DEFEAT IN MODERN TIMES... AND ONE WHICH I STILL RUE... I STILL CURSE.
MASTER, THERE IS A MAN TO SEE YOU.

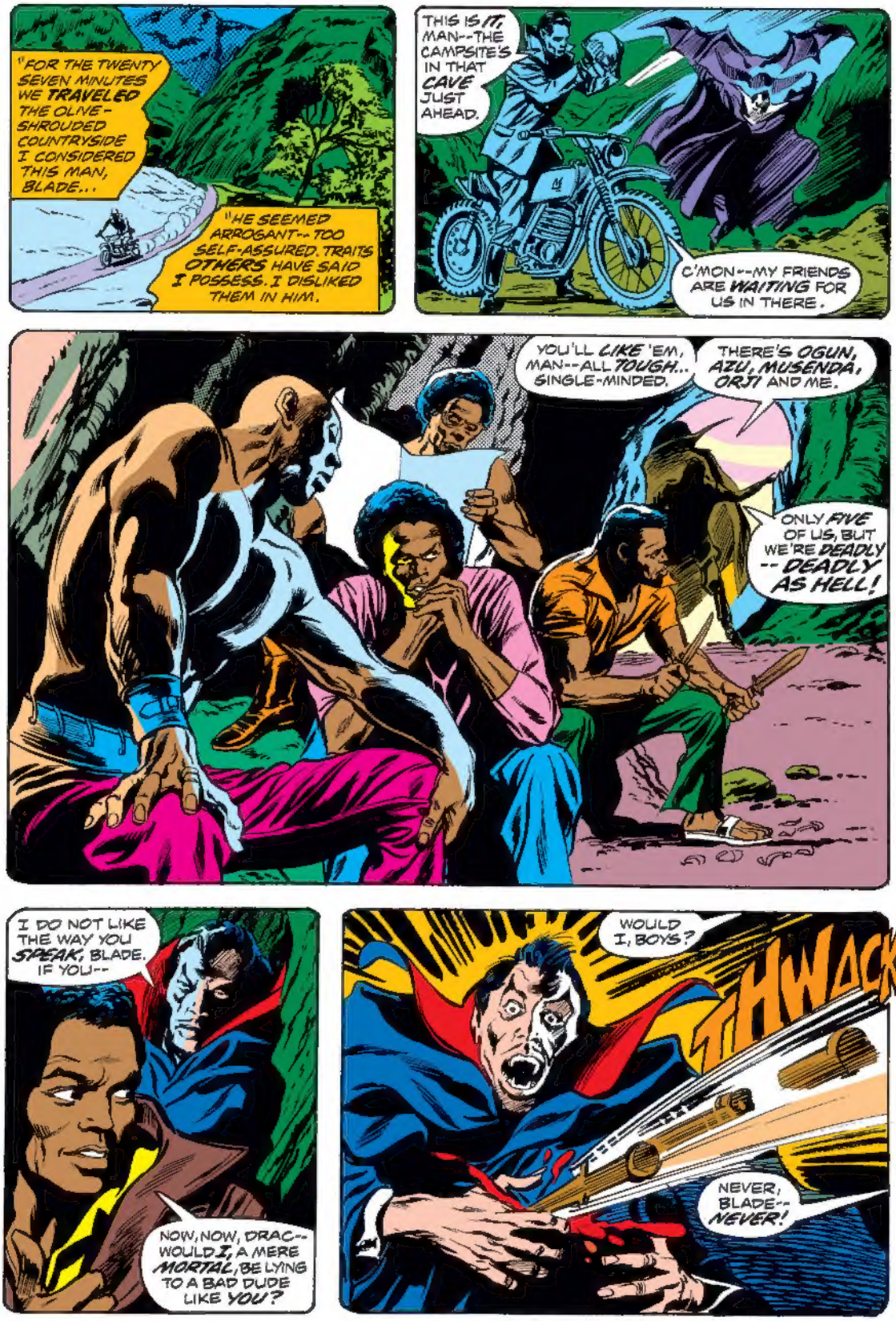

HE SAYS IT IS URGENT.
SEND HIM IN THEN, KUAI HUA TONIGHT IS QUIET. I COULD USE CONVERSATION.

DRACULA? MAN, I'VE BEEN SEARCHING MONTHS FOR YOU.
THE NAME'S BLADE.


HAD I REALIZED IT WAS A SAVAGE WHO WISHED TO SPEAK WITH ME--
AH WELL. YOU ARE HERE. SPEAK, BLADE --WHY DO YOU SEEK ME?

I WANT TO OFFER YOU THE WORLD. I MEAN IT, MAN-- THE WHOLE BLASTED WORLD!

I BELONG TO THIS GROUP AND WE REALIZED HUMANS AIN'T GOT A CHANCE 'GAINST VAMPIRES.
ACCORDING TO OUR FIGURES, IN SIXTY YEARS VAMPIRES'LL BE ALL OVER THIS MUDBALL.
WE WANT IN-- HELP YOU NOW, SORT OF PREPARE THINGS FOR YOU WHILE YOUR KIND SLEEPS. DAY-WATCHMEN. DIG?
YOU SPEAK QUICKLY, MR. BLADE. I DO NOT LIKE SLIPPERY TONGUES.
HEY, COOL IT, MAN. I'M STRAIGHT!
LOOK, MAN, WITH WORKERS LIKE US HELPIN' YA, YOU COULD CUT DOWN YOUR TIME SCHEDULE TO TEN YEARS.
ALL WE ASK IS THAT WE BE SPARED, ONE HAND WASHES THE OTHER. DIG?
I'VE CONSIDERED THE IDEA OF HUMAN RECRUITS IN THE PAST, YET--
NEVER MIND. LET ME HEAR MORE. IF I AGREE TO IT, YOU SHALL RETAIN YOUR LIFE.
IF NOT, THEN YOU SHALL STILL HELP ME REACH MY GOAL--AS A VAMPIRE.
FAIR ENOUGH, MAN. NOW, FOLLOW ME--I'LL TAKE YA TO THE GROUP.
"I DID NOT TRUST THE BLACK, YET, FOOL THAT I WAS, I THOUGHT, 'WHAT WAS THERE TO LOSE?' AT WORST THIS BLADE WOULD MERELY PROVIDE MY NIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENT.
"I HAD NO IDEA OF WHAT WAS TO COME; THUS LIKE A TRUSTING BABY, I FOLLOWED THE PATH TO DEATH.


"FOR THE TWENTY SEVEN MINUTES WE TRAVELED THE OLIVE-SHROUDED COUNTRYSIDE I CONSIDERED THIS MAN, BLADE...
"HE SEEMED ARROGANT--TOO SELF-ASSURED. TRAITS OTHERS HAVE SAID I POSSESS. I DISLIKED THEM IN HIM.
THIS IS IT, MAN--THE CAMPSITE'S IN THAT CAVE JUST AHEAD.
C'MON--MY FRIENDS ARE WAITING FOR US IN THERE.
YOU'LL LIKE 'EM, MAN--ALL TOUGH... SINGLE-MINDED.
THERE'S OGUN, AZU, MUSENDA, ORJI AND ME.
ONLY FIVE OF US, BUT WE'RE DEADLY --DEADLY AS HELL!
I DO NOT LIKE THE WAY YOU SPEAK, BLADE. IF YOU--
NOW, NOW, DRAC--WOULD I, A MERE MORTAL, BE LYING TO A BAD DUDE LIKE YOU?
WOULD I, BOYS?
THWACK
NEVER, BLADE--NEVER!

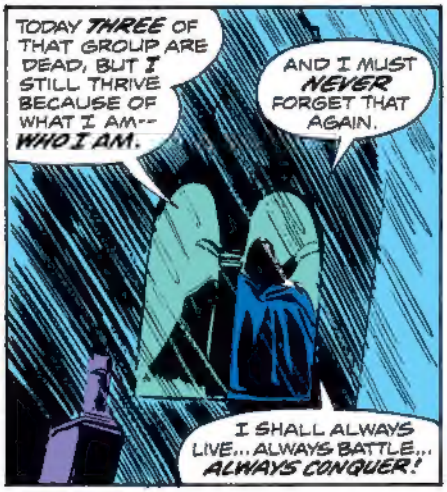
I SAID WE WANT TO HELP YOU, MAN--
'COURSE, I MEANT HELP YOU DIE, YOU STINKING SCUM--HELP YOU DIE FOREVER!
YOU SHALL PERISH FOR THIS, BLADE.
NO MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES ME, YOU SHALL BE MADE TO SUFFER.
DRACULA SHALL BE SUPREME--SUPREME!
OOOOFFFF!
BLADE SAID HE WANTED YOU DEAD, VAMPIRE--
--OGUN WILL MAKE SURE OF THAT!
AZU! HELP OGUN.
I DON'T THINK THE BIG FELLA NEEDS HELP, ORJI--
--DO YOU, MAN?
JUST ONE A' ORJI'S WOODEN KNIVES.
THEN I WON'T NEED ANYMORE HELP AT ALL!

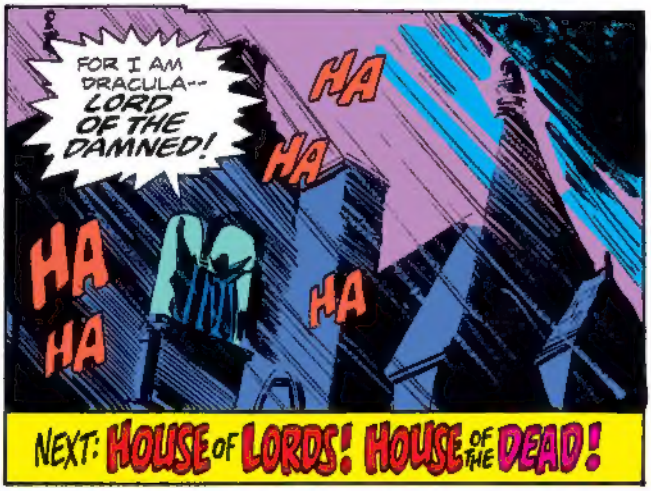
AGGHHH

KNIVES WORK LIKE A CHARM, ORJI.
I'VE BEEN TELLIN' YOU THAT, MUSENDA. FACT, ALL A' YOU SHOULD TRY 'EM.
THINK I'LL TAKE YOU UP ON THAT, ORJI--SOON'S WE GET OUTTA HERE.

"THEY LEFT THE CAVE TO PREPARE A GRAVE FOR ME, BUT WHILE THEY WERE GONE...
"...MY SERVANT, KUAI HUA AND HER HAND MAIDENS, ANSWERED MY FINAL COMMANDS..."

I WAITED IN THAT DARKLING CAVE FOR THOSE WOULD-BE FIGHTERS TO RETURN, AND BEFORE THE NIGHT WAS DONE, TWO OF THEM WERE DEAD.
BUT BLADE LIVED--THAT DAMNABLE BLADE LIVED!


TODAY THREE OF THAT GROUP ARE DEAD, BUT I STILL THRIVE BECAUSE OF WHAT I AM--WHO I AM.
AND I MUST NEVER FORGET THAT AGAIN.
I SHALL ALWAYS LIVE...ALWAYS BATTLE...ALWAYS CONQUER!


FOR I AM DRACULA--LORD OF THE DAMNED!
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
NEXT: HOUSE OF LORDS! HOUSE OF THE DEAD!